

## State Dental Director Finds ADPH Welcoming

**F**or Robert Meador, Jr., D.M.D., M.A.G.D., his first year as State Dental Director has been a fulfilling, very enjoyable and occasionally challenging one. The department had gone three years before filling this vacant position in the Bureau of Family Health Services before he came on board last February. Sherry Goode had done a great job as director in the interim.

After just one week on the job, he attended a city council meeting which he called “a real eye opener” that took him aback when a so-called “expert” opposed to community water fluoridation spoke quoting out-of-context and incomplete information.

As a result of this experience, he is taking the approach of organizing supporters from the grassroots by working with local pediatricians, dentists, school nurses and “soccer moms” to improve dental health for children in Alabama.

“Evidence has shown that for most cities every \$1 invested in fluoride saves \$38 in unnecessary treatment costs,” Meador said. The typical cost of fluoridating a local water system is between 40 cents and \$2.70 per person per year, with the cost variation depending on the size of the system and the number of people served. Eighty percent of Alabamians receive fluoridated water.

“You can’t afford not to fluoridate,” Meador said. “The benefits of fluoridation cross all socioeconomic

barriers and especially helps those without the means to enjoy better dental health.”

Meador explained that it just takes a moment for him to look at a child’s mouth and tell whether that child enjoys the benefits of fluoridated water by the extent of the decay he sees. Prevention, education and early treatment are the focus of the Oral Health Branch.

“Oral health has a big impact on general health, and we do not want to see less than optimal care for anyone,” he said.

A program that the branch began in the summer of 2012 with the employment of Tamekie Washington is to develop a social media presence and social marketing for oral health education. Updated materials are being prepared. Public health employees who are interested in educating others, such as church youth groups, are encouraged to avail themselves of these excellent materials, either in print or electronically.

“We will be more than willing to help anyone who wants to work with schools and other organizations to distribute information,” he said. “School nurses often are spread too thin to add dental health instruction to their school days.”

Prior to joining the department, the Mobile native served as assistant professor at the University of Alabama School of Dentistry, Comprehensive



**Dr. Robert Meador**

Dentistry Department, and had a private practice of dentistry in Mobile for 20 years.

Meador is proud that his profession is a giving one, with community service and giving back emphasized as a part of dental education. In his own life he has served on dental mission trips to Honduras, Ecuador, Panama, Mexico, Guatemala, Costa Rica and Jamaica. On a Habitat for Humanity trip to Kenya, the villagers outside Nairobi recognized his unique ability to place rocks in a straight line (perhaps as a result of his professional experience), so they dubbed him the official “rock layer” in their construction project. In addition, Meador has held high leadership positions and served in a variety of organizations including Rotary, American Cancer Society, Goodwill Industries and United Way. In his professional life, Meador is honored to have been named a Fellow

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## Lab Employees Make Donations to Food Banks



**D**uring the holidays, the Montgomery and the Mobile branches of the Bureau of Clinical Laboratories collected nearly 600 pounds of food for local food banks. The Montgomery Lab held a competition among each of its divisions to see which one could collect the greatest percentage of donations per person. The Respiratory Disease Division collected 12.69 pounds per employee and Quality Management Division collected 11.42 pounds per employee. Honorable mention went to the Clerical Division which collected the greatest total poundage--155 pounds. Courtney Jones (pictured) and Seyth Snell boxed, loaded and made the food delivery to the Montgomery Area Food Bank. Mobile Lab employees donated to the Bay Area Food Bank.

## CDC Seminar Features Epi-Aid in Mobile County



**S**peaking at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Tuesday Morning Seminar Jan. 15 were, left to right, Melissa Morrison; Assistant State Health Officer for Disease Control and Prevention, Dr. Mary McIntyre; and Behrooz Behbod, MB, ChB, MSc. They discussed the Mercaptan Community Assessment Epi-Aid which was conducted in Mobile County in September 2012. Behbod is Officer of the Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS), Air Pollution and Respiratory Health Branch (APRHB), Division of Environmental Hazards and Health Effects (DEHHE), National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH), at the CDC. Ms. Morrison, MPH, LCDR, USPHS, is Career Epidemiology Field Officer, Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response.

### Alabama Department of Public Health

#### Mission

To serve the people of Alabama by assuring conditions in which they can be healthy.

#### Value Statement

The purpose of the Alabama Department of Public Health is to provide caring, high quality and professional services for the improvement and protection of the public's health through disease prevention and the assurance of public health services to resident and transient populations of the state regardless of social circumstances or the ability to pay.

The Department of Public Health works closely with the community to preserve and protect the public's health and to provide caring quality services.

### Alabama's Health

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**Donald E. Williamson, M.D.**..... State Health Officer  
**Jim McVay, Dr. P.A.**..... Director, Bureau of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease  
**Arrol Sheehan, M.A.**..... Editor  
**Takenya S. Taylor, J.D.**..... Contributing Editor  
**Noelle Ahmann** ..... Graphic Designer

## Scale Back Alabama Recess Highlights Campaign Kickoff



**S**cale Back Alabama kicked off its seventh year Jan. 17 with a news conference that encouraged participants to be champions for their health. The 10-week contest encourages people to eat less and move more.

State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson encouraged employees to move at their break times instead of eating snacks with low nutritional value or, even worse, smoking. People in all lines of work and at all fitness levels can take part in a SBA recess.

Demonstrating the SBA recess were the following: Ramotalai Coker, Danny Doyle, Jonathan Edwards, Teresa Fair, Donald Jones, Ben McGhee, Stephan Mambazo, Dechelle Merritt, Sharmila Pichai, Patronya Sanks, Julia Sosa, Jennifer Sumner and Pamela Williams.

### **State Dental Director, continued from page 1**

of the American College of Dentists, a significant honor awarded to only 3.5 percent of dentists based on their contributions to organized dentistry and the community. He also has a mastership, Academy of General Dentistry, and was named Most Outstanding Dental Student, Omicron Delta Kappa. He has served on several councils with the Alabama Dental Association and was past president of the Mobile Area Dental Society.

He and his wife Jenny are the parents of three adult children and one grandson. Their older daughter Marian is an

## WIC Honors Dr. Karen Landers

**T**he Alabama WIC Program honored Public Health Area 1 Health Officer Dr. Karen Landers for her many contributions to the program over her years of service. WIC Director Carolyn Battle (left) praised Dr. Landers for being such a great advocate for the WIC Program through her active support and excellence in service to recipients.



## Breastfeeding Facts

### **Did you know .....**

1. It is possible for mothers to continue breastfeeding after returning to work or school. Check with your insurance provider for information about lactation consults and breast pumps that may be covered by the Affordable Care Act (ACA).
2. Breastfeeding mothers spend less time and money on visits to the doctor/pediatrician.
3. The Alabama WIC Program provides breastfeeding education and support up to the infant's first birthday.

engineer with Southern Nuclear and is the mother of his grandson Thad. Second daughter Anna is director of the Pharmacy at Christ Health Center and teaches parttime at the Samford University McWhorter School of Pharmacy. Their son Robert is pursuing an M.B.A. at Auburn University.

In his busy and active life, Meador enjoys hunting, fishing, kayaking, mountain bike riding and playing with Thad.

*A map of fluoridated and non-fluoridated public water systems in Alabama and fluoridation facts are on page 10.*

# Employees in the RSA Tower Celebrate Million Hearts Month

**G**et to Goal is a 16-week blood pressure self-monitoring program being conducted Feb. 8 through May 24 for employees in the RSA Tower. It is focused on evidence-based, innovative ways to improve the management of hypertension. The goal of this program is to help people identify and control hypertension and encourage participants to check and record their blood pressure every week.

The program kickoff featured a “Simple Cooking With Heart” food demonstration and tasting in the Training Room, with registration immediately following.

Get to Goal is a collaboration of the American Heart Association, Cardiovascular Health Program, Nutrition and Physical Activity Division, Office of Minority Health, and Office of Women’s Health.

## High Blood Pressure/Hypertension

- High blood pressure is symptomless; the only way you can know if you have it is by checking your blood pressure regularly.
- High blood pressure is an independent cardiovascular risk; decreasing your blood pressure can reduce mortality due to stroke and heart disease.
- Alabama has the highest rate of hypertension in the U.S., and many people with hypertension are unaware of their condition.

## Health Mentors Available

Health Mentors are available bi-weekly to help with heart health education and to encourage and remind participants to check their blood pressure.

Mentors can assist participants with recording their blood pressure readings in the American Heart Association’s online program – heart360.org. This helps participants keep track of their progress.

As a bonus, incentives will be offered to participants that check and record their blood pressure regularly. An additional incentive may be awarded to participants who complete all 16 weeks and meet a specified goal.

Upcoming educational session topics include reading “nutrition facts” labels, eating out, following a healthy diet, physical activity, making being physically active a way of life, family history, stroke assessment and warning signs and symptoms.

According to Teresa Fair, health behavior nutritionist with the Nutrition and Physical Activity Division, “The turnout to the celebration was great! I encourage everyone to be sure to stop by Suite 1010 to check your blood pressure at the self-monitoring station, on the education session off weeks.”



**Nursing students from Trenholm State Technical College assisted in checking blood pressures to help participants reach their blood pressure goals.**



**Teresa Fair and Julia Sosa of the Bureau of Professional and Support Services conducted “Simple Cooking with Heart” food demonstrations and tastings.**

# TB Screening Question Answered

**QUESTION:** Why has the screening process for TB changed?

**ANSWER:** Due to budget cuts, the health department no longer provides TB testing for pre-employment screening, volunteer work in schools, a requirement to attend school, or on persons with no known risk factors for TB.

We are and continue providing TB screening on populations at risk for TB and use our funding to treat and assess:

1. Patients with active TB Disease.
2. Patients with Latent TB Infection (LTBI). TB is dormant due to their healthy immune system and can't be spread.
3. Contacts to TB cases/suspects. (We are using a blood test called T-Spot on contacts to assess for LTBI or TB skin test.)
4. Individuals at risk for Latent TB Infection that may progress to active TB disease (as described below):
  - Immunosuppressed (HIV infections, AIDS)
  - Hodgkins Disease
  - Leukemia
  - Medical conditions: diabetes, corticosteroid therapy, post gastrectomy, silicosis, Humira Therapy or other immune suppressing treatments.
  - Substance abusers (alcohol, intravenous or other drug abuse).
  - Residents of congregate settings (nursing homes, jails, prisons).
  - Elderly (over age 70)

Nursing home and hospital employees (These institutions are now implementing their own employee screening programs.)  
Homeless

We have worked with various private providers like hospitals, nursing homes, jails, prisons, and colleges/universities to implement their own employee health screenings or refer staff and students to their primary care providers if they have no known risk factors for TB except employment requirements. We have provided educational materials and training sessions to facilitate effective screening by these private providers. Even the Montgomery Zoo has trained its employees and implemented its own screening program since most of their staff had no known risk factors for TB except working with primates and elephants.

If any of these agencies has an employee with a positive TB skin test or Interferon Gamma Release Assay (blood test) such as the QFT or T-Spot, and is not comfortable with providing the necessary radiograph (Chest X-ray) to rule out active disease and offer preventive medications like Isoniazid or Rifampin for treatment of their LTBI, then they can refer that patient to the health department for LTBI follow-up and treatment. The services we provide for our patients regarding TB are all provided to the patient and their contacts at no charge, which includes any lab work, medications, radiograph and medical case management.

## Men's Health Showdown Award Goes to Butler County



**Area 9 Administrator Ricky Elliott presents the Men's Health County Showdown Award to Nikki Lovvorn.**

**F**or the second consecutive year, the Butler County Health Department has won the statewide Men's Health Showdown Award. Nikki Lovvorn, a public health social worker in Butler County, spearheaded the men's health efforts.

Public Health Area 9 Administrator Ricky Elliott said, "I am thrilled with the outreach efforts performed by the Butler County Health Department in promoting men's health. Anything we can do directly or indirectly to assure that men live healthier, longer lives is important. Staff at the Butler County Health Department are to be commended for their outreach efforts and winning the Men's Health Showdown Award for the second year in a row. I would also like to express my appreciation to all staff in PHA 9. Every county in the area participated in promoting Men's Health. To all departmental staff who participated in this years outreach, your efforts are making a difference."

## Office of Minority Health Welcomes DHPE Fellow



**Ramotalai Coker took part in the HEART SMART kickoff event.**

The Office of Minority Health welcomed Ramotalai Coker of Washington, D.C., in September. She was selected to serve as the Department of Health Promotion Education Fellow for 2012-2013. Ms. Coker is a recent graduate of Morgan State University with a Master of Public Health Degree in Maternal and Child Health and Epidemiology. Her interests include infant mortality, international health and different health disparity issues. Ms. Coker has served as a Fellow for the Center for Interfaith Action on Global Poverty in Washington, D.C., and Global Health Fellows Program in Delhi, India.

While serving as the Office of Minority Health Fellow, Ms. Coker is assisting with the Alabama Health Disparities Elimination Plan, Limited English Proficiency Program, and State Partnership Grant activities and initiatives. She also assists the Office of Health Policy and Market Research with data analysis and policy recommendations for health behaviors and health outcomes.

*By Elana Parker Merriweather, M.Ed.,  
M..L.A.P., A.L.C.*

## Ziba Anderson Retires after Public Health Career Spanning Four Decades

Ziba Anderson, Assistant Area Administrator, retired effective Jan. 1 after 41 years of service to the Alabama Department of Public Health. At the time of his retirement Anderson served as administrator of the Butler and Covington county health departments in PHA 9, and the Lowndes and Wilcox county health departments in PHA 7.

Anderson began his departmental career on Sept. 1, 1971, as a sanitarian. He later accepted the position of administrator. He was instrumental in securing local funding during his career to construct new health department buildings in each of the four counties where he served as administrator.

“Ziba had a passion for those he served as well as the employees he worked with that is unsurpassed,” PHA 9 Administrator Ricky Elliott said. “He was committed to assuring that the public health needs of the citizens of Butler, Covington, Lowndes and Wilcox counties were met. His career spanned four decades and he served under the direction of State Health Officer Dr. Ira Myers, State Health Officer Dr. Earl Fox, Interim State Health Officer Dr. Carol Samuelson, and the longest with State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson. It was a pleasure working with Ziba, and he will be missed. His retirement leaves a void that will be difficult to fill.”

Anderson worked closely with elected officials throughout his career to assure they were informed of the importance of public health and the difference it makes in individuals' lives.



**At a reception in his honor, Anderson is shown (at center) with PHA 9 Administrator Ricky Elliott (left) and PHA 7 Administrator Jackie Holliday.**

# Unexpected Ice and Snow Reinforce Need for Preparedness

When Andrea George, Immunization Manager for Public Health Areas 1 and 2, prepared for her work day on Jan. 17, she listened to the meteorologist before setting out from her home in Decatur to drive to Walker County for a validation survey and to pick up some vaccine.

Apparently, the weather forecaster miscalculated the weather conditions for the area. Ms. George first saw the snow and sleet begin near Jasper at around 10 a.m. As she was attempting to drive into a doctor's office parking lot, her Hyundai Sonata slid off the road. But she was still able to pick up some vaccine before heading back to the Area 2 office.

As she drove up a hill on a two-lane highway, she saw the traffic was stopped. A van was overturned on the side of the road, and a woman walking in the snow approached her and informed her to be careful because other vehicles were crashing on the incline ahead.

The local rescue squad around the Boldo area, however, directed her out of the line of traffic and she continued traveling at 5 miles per hour. By the time she reached Cullman, it looked as if it would rain. Then on Interstate 65, she began what would be extremely slow going that included a three-hour delay on the wreck-filled highway. Because she only had a quarter-tank of gas, she turned off her engine. She noticed the temperature was 32 degrees F and 3 to 4 inches of snow was on the roadway. Then for only the second time in her life, hazardous thunder snow began to fall.

"You have to have a lot of patience," she said. "I was gripping my steering wheel hard." Ms. George had to drive in low gear on ice at speeds of 1 to 2 miles per hour. In her light-weight car, she was allowed to pass an 18-wheeler and a pickup truck that didn't negotiate the icy road so successfully.

Fortunately, she was able to communicate with her co-workers who checked on her throughout the day and after hours. Area Administrator Judy Smith was even making plans to assist her if she were forced to spend the night on the Interstate. "Their care and concern made a difficult day much better," Ms. George said.

Despite the frightful conditions, Ms. George noted that other motorists were careful, considerate and helpful for the most part. She had no fear for her personal safety on the road, either. As a public health employee, she came prepared.

"I do carry items in preparation for emergencies, such as water, trail mix, an emergency warmth blanket, a flashlight and a candle," Ms. George said. The recommended item she found to be most helpful was a battery-operated radio, which

she tuned to a local Huntsville station that was broadcasting road updates and other information she needed. She also was able to keep up with the situation in her conversations with her colleagues.

In the "lessons learned" category, she urges all motorists to keep an ice scraper handy, because she had to break the ice on her windshield so the road ahead would be visible. Also, in the future she plans to fill up her gas tank as soon as she learns of impending bad weather. She said, "I'll do that next time for sure."

She has already added some new items to her vehicle's emergency supplies—a heavy coat, sturdy shoes, heavy socks and gloves.

Her frightening trip that should have lasted 90 minutes turned into an eight-hour, white-knuckled journey that ended at her door at almost 6:30 p.m. She said many heart-felt prayers of thanks for her safe arrival.



**This is a view of the road Andrea George took with her cell phone early in the day. Road conditions worsened before she made it home on the evening of Jan. 17.**

## Commendations

If you would like to praise employees for their accomplishments, send letters of commendation to the State Health Officer or the employee's supervisor and a copy by e-mail to [arrol.sheehan@adph.state.al.us](mailto:arrol.sheehan@adph.state.al.us) for inclusion in this list. Four items are needed: the employee's name, work unit, name of the person making the commendation, and his or her city and state.

**Angela Anderson, R.N.**  
Monroe/Escambia Home Health  
from Ricky Elliott  
Bay Minette, Ala.  
from Evelyn Finklea, R.N.  
Monroe County Health Department

**Bureau of Clinical Laboratories**  
Mobile, Ala.  
from Karla Gardner  
Patrice Hernandez  
Mobile, Ala.

**Bureau of Clinical Laboratories**  
Montgomery, Ala.  
from William I. Havron  
Montgomery, Ala.

**Diane Chandler**  
**Wayne Dubose**  
**Debra Foster**  
**Amy Moore**  
**Pat Murphy**  
Bureau of Health Provider Standards  
from Cindy Lewis  
Cullman, Ala.

**Diane Chandler**  
**Grace Lowe**  
**Pat Murphy**  
**Connie Pavelec**  
Bureau of Health Provider Standards  
from Sherry Ginn  
Phenix City, Ala.

**Tamika Garrett**  
Center for Health Statistics  
from Roy Haddan  
Quincy, Fla.

**Inga Jackson**  
**Lee McElvaine**  
Bureau of Clinical Laboratories  
from Pete Preston  
Montgomery, Ala.

**Licensure Unit**  
Bureau of Health Provider  
Standards  
from Virginia Lovelace  
Address unlisted

**Twila Pigg**  
Center for Health Statistics  
from Sidney B. Segler  
Palm Bay, Fla.

**Video Communications and  
Distance Learning Division**  
Bureau of Health Promotion and  
Chronic Disease  
from Rosemary Blackmon  
Montgomery, Ala.

**Priscilla Vinson**  
Center for Health Statistics  
from Dearry Humphries  
Georgia

## Retirees

**November**  
**Johnny Brown**  
Children's Health Insurance Program

**Alva Rene Haynes**  
Health Finance  
**Deberel Nolen**  
Randolph County Health Department  
**Kimberly Strickland**  
Houston County Health Department

**December**  
**Deborah Guyton**  
Lamar County Health Department  
**Pamela Johnson**  
Public Health Area VI  
**Joanna Roberson**  
Bureau of Clinical Laboratories

**January**  
**Mary Arnold**  
Conecuh County Health Department  
**Carrie Burks**  
Perry County Health Department  
**Walton Commander**  
Bureau of Clinical Laboratories

**Winfred Cotten**  
Jackson County Health Department  
**Patricia Gray**  
Houston County Health Department  
**Jim Hollins**  
Bureau of Environmental Services

**Terril Kyzar**  
Covington County Health Department  
**Mary Myers**  
Dallas County Health Department  
**Brenda Payne**  
Talladega County Health Department

**Benjamin Peters**  
Conecuh County Health Department  
**Barbara Small**  
Bureau of Family Health Services



## Opportunities Abound at ALPHA Conference

Register now through LCMS for the 57th Annual Alabama Public Health Association Education Conference April 3-5 on the campus of the University of Alabama at Birmingham. The theme is "Public Health at the Edge of Chaos... Where Opportunities Abound."

The Alabama Environmental Health Association will be holding its education sessions jointly with ALPHA on April 3 and 4.

Visit [alphassoc.org](http://alphassoc.org) for more information.

# The Edge of Chaos

# Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response (CASPER) Commendations

Public Health Area 9 Administrator Ricky Elliott thanked employees and their supervisors for their work on the coastal and county CASPERs in Baldwin County last September. A total of 374 surveys were completed. The data collected will enable public health practitioners and emergency management officials to determine the health status and basic needs of residents of Baldwin County two years after the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. The data will also be beneficial in aiding public health officials and emergency managers to prioritize their response and distribution of resources accurately. The following individuals were recognized:

**Frances L. Ankum**  
Baldwin County Health Department

**Teddy King**  
Baldwin County Health Department

**Teresa Porter**  
PHA 9

**Kendall Bush**  
Clarke County Health Department

**Kevin Kiser**  
PHA 9

**Tammy Ricks**  
Baldwin County Health Department

**Rena Carpenter**  
PHA 9

**Kipp Kyzar**  
Baldwin County Health Department

**Aruna Rikhi**  
Bureau of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease

**Leta A. Cook**  
Baldwin County Health Department

**Terry Kyzar**  
Covington County Health Department

**Jason Roley**  
Baldwin County Health Department

**Bradley Cooper**  
Choctaw County Health Department

**Cathy Lasource**  
Baldwin County Health Department

**Kelly Singleton**  
PHA 9

**Camilla English**  
Baldwin County Health Department

**Bill Lenz**  
Baldwin County Health Department

**Ashley L. Smith**  
Baldwin County Health Department

**Nancy M. Esham**  
Baldwin County Health Department

**Drew Nelson**  
Bureau of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease

**Jessica R. Wade**  
Baldwin County Health Department

**Barbara Etheridge**  
Marengo County Health Department

**JoAnna Palmer**  
Baldwin County Health Department

**Rendella Williams**  
PHA 8

**John Guarisco**  
Bureau of Communicable Disease

**Jan Perry**  
Baldwin County Health Department

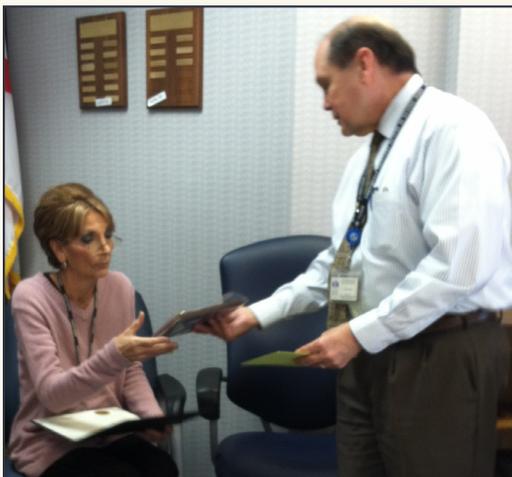
**Kellie Williamson**  
Covington County Health Department

**Dnene Johnson**  
Baldwin County Health Department

**Ashley Phelps**  
Butler County Health Department

**Michael Woodfin**  
Perry County Health Department

**Bill Kelly**  
Baldwin County Health Department



**Bureau Director Dr. Tom Geary presents a retirement certificate to Pam Childree upon her retirement from the Bureau of Health Provider Standards after nearly 25 years of service.**



**Co-workers honored Shirley M. Williams who retired from the Bureau of Family Health Services Feb. 1 with 33 years of service.**

# Diabetes Prevention Coordinator Honored

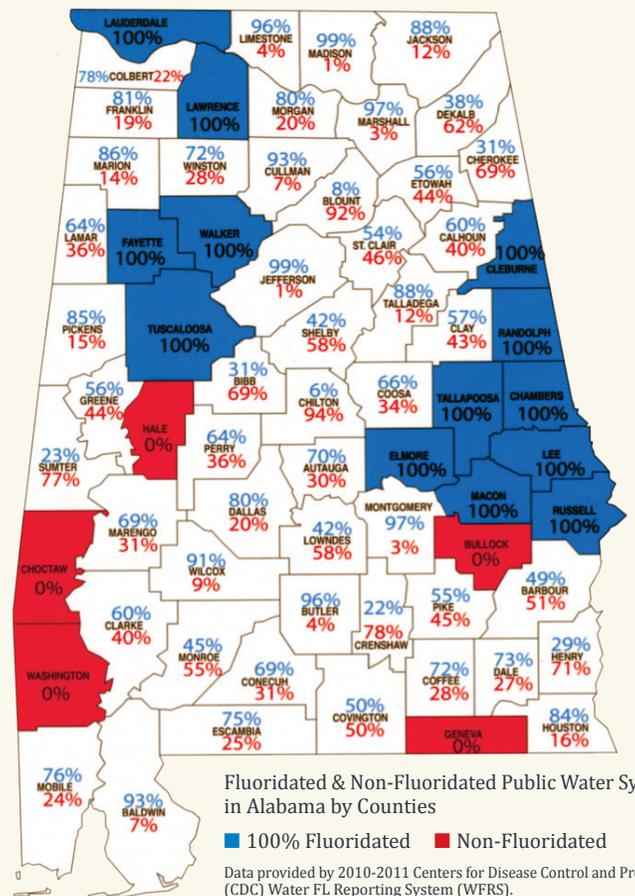


**D**ebbly LaCruz, diabetes prevention coordinator of the YMCA, Birmingham, was presented the Diabetes and Cardiovascular Prevention and Management Award Feb. 7. Ms. LaCruz was recognized “for teaching current and future health care leaders and enabling them to climb the stairs of health care knowledge one step at a time with outstanding instruction.” Pictured (left to right) are LaMont Pack, director of the Diabetes Prevention and Control Unit; Debra Griffin, diabetes coordinator/educator; Ms. LaCruz and Melanie Rightmyer, cardiovascular unit program director.

# Service to Alabama Public Health Care Authority Recognized



**S**tate Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson honored Deidra Munnerlyn as she concluded her eight years of service on the Alabama Public Health Care Authority. The State Committee of Public Health established the authority as a public corporation in 1995. Its mission is to build, furnish and equip public health facilities throughout Alabama. During this time, 36 public health facilities have been constructed, renovated and occupied, and work is underway on other projects.



# Options for Adopted Children and their Birth Parents in Alabama Are Unlike Those in Most Other States

For the past 12 years, persons born in Alabama who have been adopted and their birth parents have had options they did not previously have and which are available in only a few other states.

The Alabama Legislature amended the vital records law in 2000, to allow birth parents to complete contact information and family medical history forms and have those forms placed in the sealed file of a child he or she put up for adoption. In addition, the law allows adult adoptees, aged 19 or over, to make requests for informational copies of the contents of their sealed birth files.

The contact preference form is considered a private communication from the birth parent to the child, is kept in a sealed envelope, and copies of the form are only given to the adoptee. The medical history form asks birth parents to provide known information about whether they or their family members have had any of more than 30 conditions listed and provides space for comments.

The adult adoptee who applies will receive copies of all documents in the sealed file which often include the legal documents from the court where the adoption took place as well as the original birth certificate. If a contact preference

form or family medical history form is in the sealed file at the time the adult adoptee requests the contents of his or her sealed file, that will be sent to the adult adoptee.

“Only 225 birth parents have placed contact or medical information in a sealed file while over 5,000 individuals have requested copies of the contents of their sealed files,” Cathy Molchan Donald, state registrar and director of the Center for Health Statistics, said. “We want to make sure birth parents and adult adoptees are aware they have this avenue available.”

A nonrefundable search fee of \$25 is charged for placing a contact preference form and family medical history form in a sealed file. The same nonrefundable search fee is charged to adult adoptees seeking copies of the contents of their sealed files.

Information and forms are available at [adph.org/vitalrecords/](http://adph.org/vitalrecords/). In addition, adopted children and birth parents may call (334) 206-5426 to obtain the forms or send a letter that includes their mailing address and daytime telephone number to request forms. Requests for forms should be sent to Vital Records-Adoptions Section, P.O. Box 5625, Montgomery, Ala. 36103-5625. For additional information call (334) 206-5426.

## Fluoridation Facts, continued from page 10

It is the most efficient way to prevent one of the most common childhood diseases – dental decay (5 times as common as asthma and 7 times as common as hay fever in 5-to-17-year-olds). Without fluoridation, there would be many more than the estimated 51 million school hours lost per year in this country because of dental-related illness.

- Community water fluoridation is the adjustment of fluoride that occurs naturally in water to recommended levels to protect oral health.
- Water that has been fortified with fluoride is similar to fortifying salt with iodine, milk with vitamin D and orange juice with vitamin C.
- Simply by drinking water, people can benefit from fluoridation’s cavity protection whether they are at home, work or school.
- The average cost for a community to fluoridate its water is estimated to range from approximately \$3.00 a year per person in small communities to approximately \$0.50 a year per person in large communities.

- For most cities, every \$1 invested in water fluoridation yields \$38 savings in dental treatment costs. An individual can have a lifetime of fluoridated water for less than the cost of a silver filling.
- The latest data show that in 2010, 73.9 percent of the U.S. population on public water systems, or a total of 204.3 million people, had access to optimally fluoridated water.
- In the past 12 years, more than 362 U.S. communities in 41 states have voted to adopt or retain successful fluoridation programs.
- Fluoridation has been thoroughly tested in the United States’ court system, and found to be a proper means of furthering public health and welfare. No court of last resort has ever determined fluoridation to be unlawful.
- There is misinformation on the Internet and other junk science related to water fluoridation. One of the most widely respected sources for information regarding fluoridation and fluorides is the American Dental Association. The ADA maintains fluoride and fluoridation web pages at <http://www.ada.org/fluoride>.



# Calendar of Events



**March 6**  
Addressing Stigma-Related HIV and Other Sexually Transmitted Infections, noon-1:30 p.m.  
For more information contact Video Communications, (334) 206-5618.



**March 7**  
Oral Health for Home Care Professional Staff, 2-4 p.m.  
For more information contact Shirley Offutt, (334) 206-2481.



**March 13**  
Home Care Infection Control and OSHA Update 2013 for Professional Staff, 2-4 p.m.  
For more information contact Shirley Offutt, (334) 206-2481.



**March 20**  
Cardiovascular Risk Reduction in Diabetes, 2-4 p.m.  
For more information contact Debra Griffin, (334) 206-2066.



**March 27**  
Caring for the Depressed Elderly in Home Care, 2-4 p.m.  
For more information contact Becky Leavins, (334) 206-3867.



**March 27**  
STD Review, 8-9:30 a.m.  
For more information contact Thresa Dix, (334) 206-3377.

**April 3-5**  
Public Health at the Edge of Chaos...Where Opportunities Abound, Alabama Public Health Association Educational Conference, Birmingham.  
For more information visit [www.alphassoc.org](http://www.alphassoc.org).



**April 4**  
ADPH Statewide Staff Meeting.  
For more information contact Video Communications, (334) 206-5618.



**April 10**  
Home Health, 10 a.m.-noon.  
For more information contact Shirley Offutt, (334) 206-2481.



**April 17**  
Infection Control, 9-10:30 a.m.  
For more information contact Thresa Dix, (334) 206-3377.



**April 17**  
Minority Health, 2-4 p.m.  
For more information contact Elana Parker Merriweather, (334) 206-7980.



**April 24**  
Home Health Aides and Home Attendants, 2-4 p.m.  
For more information contact Becky Leavins, (334) 206-3867.

**May 11**  
Annual Women's Health 5K Run and 1-Mile Mother-Daughter Walk, Wilson YMCA - Park Crossing Road (Ray Thorington-Taylor Connector Road), Montgomery. For more information contact Dechelle Merritt, (334) 206-5669.

**May 18**  
Annual Women's Health 5K Run and 1-Mile Mother-Daughter Walk, Homewood Greenway Walking Trail, Lakeshore Drive across from Samford University, Homewood. For more information contact Dechelle Merritt, (334) 206-5669.